What Makes Service Research Centers Effective?

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Academic service research centers have been positioned as a research partner for service companies. In this article, the authors present a framework for assessing their effectiveness. The results of an empirical study conducted during 2 years suggest that user satisfaction is central to establishing decision maker trust, as well as promoting the use of the information. In both years, quality of content and researcher characteristics were identified as key drivers of satisfaction. In the initial stage of the relationship between the service research center and the client firm, information use is also driven by the political acceptability of the information. It was found that trust had no effect on information use. However, the results of the second year suggest that particularly trust in the researcher becomes a crucial factor as the relationship develops, because it directly affects the use of information by academic service research centers.

Effective use of marketing information is crucial for service providers in today's competitive environment in which geographical boundaries are rapidly converging (Menon and Varadarajan 1992). The task of gathering information is commonly the responsibility of internal research departments or commercial research agencies. Recently, university-based service research centers have profiled themselves as a new research partner. One unique selling point of these centers is that clients have direct access to scientific knowledge and expertise. Alternatively, partnering with firms yields the benefits of access to testing grounds and additional funding for academic service research centers.

So far, however, virtually nothing is known about factors that determine the performance of these service research centers. The question of what makes service research centers effective remains unanswered. This seems to be an important omission in the service research literature. In this article, we attempt to formulate an answer. It is structured as follows. First, the construct of intelligence use is conceptualized briefly, and a number of possible antecedents are discussed. Subsequently, we develop a new conceptual model on academic marketing intelligence use and formulate several research hypotheses. Finally, the results of an empirical study, conducted in an international business-to-business service setting at two different points in time, are presented and a number of theoretical and managerial implications are provided.

MARKETING INTELLIGENCE USE

A multitude of studies have focused on the use of marketing intelligence by organizations (e.g., Deshpandé and

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Zaltman 1982, 1984, 1985, 1987; Krishnan 1989; Maltz and Kohli 1996; Menon and Wilcox 1994; Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman 1993; Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpandé 1992). A widely used conceptualization of knowledge use distinguishes between instrumental use, conceptual use, and symbolic use (Menon and Varadarajan 1992). Instrumental use is the application of knowledge to solve a particular problem or make particular decisions (Deshpandé and Zaltman 1982). Information can also be used for general enlightenment rather than for taking actions. This is referred to as conceptual use (Deshpandé and Zaltman 1982), which Menon and Wilcox (1994) classify as knowledge-enhancing use. Through conceptual use, knowledge and understanding of the issues under study will be changed. Finally, information can also be distorted beyond its correct intent and used symbolically (Feldman and March 1981; Menon and Varadarajan 1992). Symbolic use occurs when intelligence is misused by taking conclusions out of their context and disclosing only those that confirm an executive's predetermined positions, by oversimplifying findings, and/or by consciously ignoring any accompanying caveats or assumptions that may weaken the findings. Other forms of symbolic use are using findings to legitimize and sustain previously held dispositions or distorting findings to justify actions taken for other reasons.

In addition to conceptualization issues, it seems relevant to pay attention to factors that influence the use of intelligence by marketing decision makers. To facilitate this, we conceive of the provision of market information as a service. When taking such an approach, the well-known distinction between technical and functional service quality applies. Technical quality refers to the (international) marketing information provided, whereas functional quality relates to the way in which this information is being delivered to the client. Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982) identified a range of technical and functional factors that relate to the instrumental use of market research intelligence. Examples are the quality of the contents (technical) and the interaction between information provider and client (functional). This interaction, in turn, is related to certain interpersonal characteristics of the researcher, such as integrity and expertise (Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman 1993). On the basis of path analyses, Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982) concluded that higher levels of perceived content quality, perceived ability to take actions on the research, and political acceptability of recommendations resulted in higher instrumental use of intelligence. The causal relationship between quality of the information format and instrumental use was found to be relatively weak. Furthermore, higher levels of perceived interaction between research supplier and client were also positively related to instrumental use of market research information.

These findings apply to a business-to-consumer context. When extending their study to a business-to-business setting, different results were reported by Deshpandé and Zaltman (1987). Apparently, the nature of industrial settings has specific characteristics that distinguish them from consumer goods settings and that translate into the role of marketing information and the factors influencing its use. According to Webster (1978), these are greater functional interdependence, greater technical product complexity, stronger buyer-seller interdependence, and greater buying process complexity. This seems to justify further systematic and empirical analyses of marketing intelligence use in business-to-business service settings.

The level of trust that organizations have in research providers also has been shown to influence intelligence use (Maltz and Kohli 1996; Moorman and Austin 1995; Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpandé 1992). Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman (1993) state that the level of trust in producers of intelligence will determine mere possession of information or actual use. The level of trust was also found to influence perceived quality of user-provider interactions, the level of researcher involvement, and the level of user commitment to the relationship (Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpandé 1992). Taking aforementioned findings into account, we now develop a conceptual framework of academic intelligence use in an international business marketing setting by developing a number of research hypotheses.

DEVELOPMENT OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In this article, we define academic intelligence use as the extent to which a marketing decision maker uses information disseminated by an academic research center to understand the international environment and to make and implement marketing decisions. We posit that the actual use of information is determined by satisfaction with the outcome and process of the research project, as well as trust in the researcher partner. Furthermore, in accordance with previous findings in the relationship marketing literature on services (de Ruyter and Wetzels 2000), we expect that trust in the researcher depends on satisfaction with the academic research project. In turn, satisfaction will be causally related to four technical service quality constructs (i.e., quality of contents, quality of form, actionability, and political acceptability of information) and one functional service quality construct (i.e., researcher interpersonal characteristics).

Satisfaction can be described as the consumer's cognitive and affective evaluation of the product or service that

has been provided by a specific supplier. A relationship between two partners can only continue to exist when a certain level of trust between both parties has developed (Wetzels, de Ruyter, and van Birgelen 1998). Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpandé (1992) define trust as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (p. 315) and found that trust has a positive effect on intelligence use. Furthermore, satisfaction is likely to lead to acceptance and use of the academic intelligence for marketing decision-making purposes. Consequently, we posit the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between total satisfaction with the academic research project and academic intelligence use.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between total satisfaction with the academic research project and trust in the academic researcher.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a positive relationship between trust in the academic researcher and academic intelligence use.

Satisfaction is a subjective evaluation that follows the experience of quality (de Ruyter, Bloemer, and Peeters 1997). Technical service quality consists of quality of contents, quality of form, actionability, and political acceptability of the information disseminated. Quality of contents refers to issues that form the perceived overall quality of a marketing research project, such as applied research techniques, apropos use of scientific measurements, structure of data collection, and price-value trade-off. Menon and Varadarajan (1992) suggest that a receiver's perception of intelligence quality influences the degree to which he or she acts on it. Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982, 1984) found a positive effect of quality of contents on use of the information. As for all service quality-related constructs, we expect the relationship between quality of contents and intelligence use to be mediated by decision maker total satisfaction with the academic research project, resulting in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: There will be a positive relationship between quality of contents and total satisfaction with the academic research project.

In addition to quality of contents, quality of form of the research report and/or its presentation might have an effect on academic intelligence use. The specific physical form of marketing research has been shown to have an impact on use (Deshpandé and Zaltman 1982, 1984). We hypothesize the following relationship:

Hypothesis 5: There will be a positive relationship between quality of form and total satisfaction with the academic research project.

To increase the likelihood of intelligence use by decision makers, information should be actionable. The value of research intelligence increases if managers perceive the intelligence provided as actionable (Deshpandé and Zaltman 1982). Actionability can be described as the extent to which the intelligence and recommendations are perceived to be implementable into practice and was found to positively influence intelligence use as well (Deshpandé and Zaltman 1982, 1984). The following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 6: There will be a positive relationship between actionability of academic intelligence and total satisfaction with the academic research project.

Political acceptability of academic marketing intelligence can be described as the compatibility of the information with company objectives. It refers to the fact whether information is tuned to internal policies and objectives. According to Kohli and Jaworski (1990), responsiveness of intelligence use may be a function of factors such as the political acceptability of intelligence and the extent to which it challenges status quo. In support of this, Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982, 1984) found a positive effect of political acceptability on intelligence use. We expect that higher levels of political acceptability of academic intelligence results in higher total satisfaction levels and thus ultimately in higher intelligence use:

Hypothesis 7: There will be a positive relationship between political acceptability of academic intelligence and total satisfaction with the academic research project.

Finally, functional service quality is mainly determined by interpersonal characteristics of the researcher(s) conducting the study. Important qualities are, for example, expertise, integrity, flexibility, and confidentiality. Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman (1993) found an empirical causal linkage between interpersonal qualities and decision maker trust in the researcher. We posit that this relationship will be mediated by total satisfaction with the research project:

Hypothesis 8: There will be a positive relationship between researcher characteristics and total satisfaction with the academic research project.

In the next section, we report on an empirical test of our conceptual framework.

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

Research Design and Data Collection

An academic service research center in the Netherlands has been conducting an international marketing research project for a multinational office equipment manufacturer. The project involves a large-scale international customer satisfaction survey in 11 countries. The focus in the survey is on after-sales services. For our study, data were collected during 2 consecutive years from a sample of upper and middle-lower management levels. This 2-year period of data collection enables us to validate our conceptual model over time and compare empirical relationships between both years.

A mail questionnaire was designed, consisting of multiple items that operationalize the constructs in our conceptual model. Each item was formulated as a statement on which respondents could react by using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). In Year 1, a total number of 80 questionnaires were mailed to managers across several operating companies of the multinational manufacturing organization. In Year 2, 87 questionnaires were mailed. Questionnaires were accompanied by a cover letter and a postage-paid return envelope. Initially, 68 and 78 respondents participated in our study for Year 1 and Year 2, respectively. However, on the basis of control questions assessing respondents' job titles and whether they were familiar with the information from the research project, 3 respondents were excluded from our sample for Year 1 and 5 respondents for Year 2, because they could not be expected to be in an actual decision-making position. Consequently, the final sample consisted of 65 respondents for Year 1 and 73 respondents for Year 2, resulting in response rates of 81% and 84%, respectively.

Questionnaire Development

In addition to our literature review, the research instrument was developed on the basis of interviews with users of marketing research information. These respondents were excluded from the actual study, because this could evoke test-retest biases. The interviews also yielded a number of items that needed to be adapted in the final questionnaire. The constructs relating to the technical service quality of the academic research project (quality of contents, quality of form, actionability, and political acceptability) were operationalized on the basis of validated scales previously used by Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982). Quality of contents was measured by seven items, quality of form by four items, actionability by six items and political acceptability by four items. To measure the researcher interpersonal characteristics, representing functional quality, five items based on Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman (1993) were used. The three items relating to total satisfaction with the research project were developed specifically for this study. The items focused on measuring satisfaction with the contents, the presentation, and the researcher, and thus on research project outcome and process. Trust in the researcher was measured by five items on the basis of a scale by Moorman, Zaltman, and Deshpandé (1992). Finally, academic intelligence use was operationalized by seven items on the basis of a scale by Maltz and Kohli (1996). Table 1 presents a number of sample items for each of the constructs.

Data Analysis

Before testing our hypotheses, we first assessed the level of internal consistency of the scales by performing reliability analyses. Table 1 presents the Cronbach's alpha reliability scores of the various scales. As can be seen in Table 1, for both years, the reliability scores approximate or exceed the desired threshold value of .70, except for political acceptability in Year 1.

We chose not to explicitly assess the psychometric properties of the measurement instruments in this explorative study, as the sample size in both years is insufficient for the use of exploratory factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis. Therefore, we opted for aggregating the items for each construct and then correcting for measurement error by fixing the path from the indicator to the construct (Γ^X and Γ^Y) by coefficient α and the error variance of the indicator by 1 minus coefficient α. This simpler model allows us to estimate the structural model at a more favorable ratio of sample size to free parameters than the measurement model. Netemeyer, Johnston, and Burton (1990) report that this approach basically yields the same results as a latent variable model with multiple indicators. The main advantage is that it deals with the sample size problems occurring with the use of structural equation modeling with multiple indicators with a relatively small sample size.

One major weak point of this approach is that quality of construct measurement cannot be explicitly assessed. A solution for this problem is using confirmatory factor analysis (measurement model) in the first stage of the analysis (cf. Anderson and Gerbing 1988). As already mentioned, in the present study, this is not possible due to the small sample sizes. Therefore, to gain more insight into construct validity, bivariate correlation analyses were performed. The results of these analyses for Year 1 and Year 2 are presented in Table 2. Overall, Table 2 shows that constructs indeed are significantly correlated in the direction being hypothesized, except for political acceptability and

TABLE 1
Sample Items and Construct Reliabilities

Construct	*Sample Item*	*Year 1*	*Year 2*
Quality of contents	The research techniques were applied appropriately	.78	.75
	The information provided was worth the money spent		
	The results of the research project can be used very well to solve current problems within XXX		
Quality of form	There were too many tables/graphs/statistics in the presentation	.82	.73
	The analysis of the data in the presentation was more complex than necessary		
Actionability	Besides statistical data, the report also provides explicit recommendations for action	.82	.76
	The recommendations are easy to put into effect		
	The information was on time for taking pending decisions		
Political acceptability	The recommendations seemed to be organization-politically acceptable to me	.49	.73
	The recommendations are in line with the prevailing beliefs at XXX		
Researcher characteristics	The researcher has a high level of expertise	.86	.87
	The researcher seems to have a great deal of integrity		
	The researcher can be expected to keep confidential what he or she learns about our organization beyond the specific research project		
Total satisfaction	I am very satisfied with the contents of the research project	.87	.77
	I am very satisfied with the presentation of the research results		
	I am very satisfied with the researcher of the research project		
Trust in researcher	I trust the researcher to do things my department cannot do	.65	.80
	I generally do trust the researcher		
Intelligence use	The information provided by the research project will help me to improve the implementation of quality issues	.79	.86
	The information provided by the research project has improved my understanding of how customers perceive the quality of our service		
	The information provided by the research project will lead me to undertake concrete actions		

NOTE: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*.

satisfaction in Year 1. Furthermore, we found that all correlation coefficients were statistically significant different from unity.

Satisfaction and related measures are prone to extreme skewness. Since LISREL relies on strong assumptions of normality, we conducted additional analyses to check the distribution of the variables. Although some variables (quality of contents [Years 1 and 2], quality of form [Years 1 and 2], total satisfaction [Years 1 and 2], intelligence use [Year 1]) deviated significantly from a normal distribution using a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, this might be due to sample size. A more detailed evaluation revealed that these variables were significantly negatively skewed. However, inspection of the expected normal probability plot and the defended expected normal probability plot revealed that the magnitude of skewness was only moderate. These results were corroborated by inspection of the expected normal probability plot (Q-plot) of the standardized residuals of the models, which showed a straight line on a slope larger than 45° for both models. On the basis of these analyses and the corrective actions taken concerning limited sample size, we feel confident to test the hypotheses using our data.

Hypotheses Testing

To test the hypotheses we formulated, structural equation modeling with LISREL 8 was used. We used LISREL to obtain maximum likelihood estimates of the path coefficients. As the chi-square value is not independent of sample size, various fit indexes have been developed that are supposedly independent of sample size (Hu and Bentler 1995). Among these, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) seem to be relatively unaffected by sample size.

The fit of our proposed model turned out to be good for Year 1, as well as for Year 2. For Year 1, the fit statistics are as follows: $\chi^2_{(12)} = 14.28$ ($p = .28$), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) = 0.95, Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.85, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.036, TLI = 0.95, CFI = 0.98. For Year 2, these statistics are as follows: $\chi^2_{(11)} = 12.89$ ($p = .30$), GFI = 0.96, AGFI = 0.86, RMSEA = 0.044, TLI = 0.98, CFI = 0.99. All measures closely approximate or exceed the recommended cutoff values. The hypotheses can be tested by inspecting the path coefficients. The empirical relationships for the consecutive years are rendered in Figures 1 and 2.

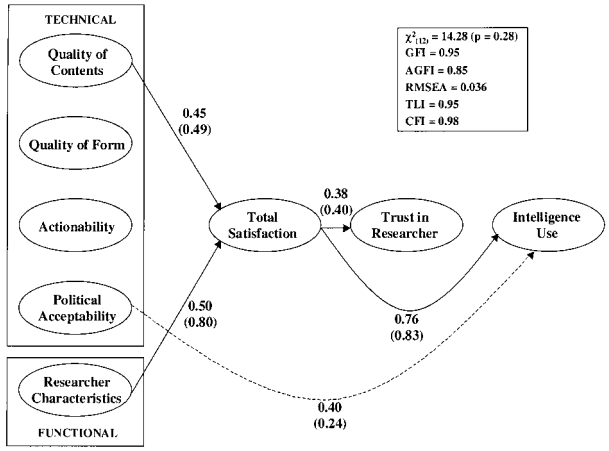
As can be concluded from Figures 1 and 2, Hypothesis 1 is supported for both years by a significant positive relationship between total satisfaction with the academic research project and academic intelligence use by decision makers. Decision makers who in total are more satisfied with the research project are more likely to use the information for marketing decision-making purposes. Furthermore, in support of Hypothesis 2, for both years, we found

TABLE 2
Bivariate Construct Correlations

	QCON	*QFORM*	*ACTION*	*POLACC*	*RESCHAR*	*TOTSAT*	*TRUST*	*INTUSE*
Year 1								
QCON	1.00							
QFORM	.13	1.00						
ACTION	.58**	.28*	1.00					
POLACC	.11	.08	–.04	1.00				
RESCHAR	.38**	.08	.44**	–.18	1.00			
TOTSAT	.61**	.25*	.50**	.00	.68**	1.00		
TRUST	.14	–.07	.19	.16	.44**	.33**	1.00	
INTUSE	.60**	.10	.34**	.36**	.33**	.45**	.30**	1.00
Year 2								
QCON	1.00							
QFORM	.53**	1.00						
ACTION	.44**	.32**	1.00					
POLACC	.43**	.25*	.53**	1.00				
RESCHAR	.51**	.62**	.42**	.35**	1.00			
TOTSAT	.75**	.56**	.36**	.30**	.69**	1.00		
TRUST	.43**	.50**	.48**	.30**	.69**	.62**	1.00	
INTUSE	.66**	.47**	.50**	.43**	.52**	.67**	.70**	1.00

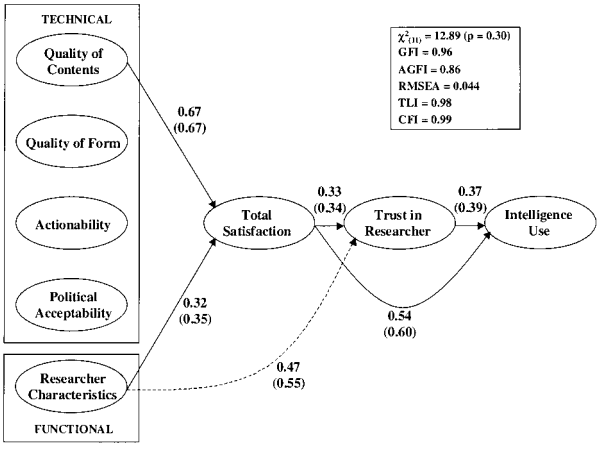
NOTE: QCON = quality of contents; QFORM = quality of form; ACTION = actionability; POLACC = political acceptability; RESCHAR = researcher characteristics; TOTSAT = total satisfaction; TRUST = trust in researcher; INTUSE = intelligence use.
*Significant at $\alpha = .05$. **Significant at $\alpha = .01$.

FIGURE 1
Causal Model of Academic Intelligence Use (Year 1)



NOTE: Only significant standardized path coefficients are shown ($\alpha = .05$). Unstandardized path coefficients are in parentheses.

FIGURE 2
Causal Model of Academic Intelligence Use (Year 2)



NOTE: Only significant standardized path coefficients are shown ($\alpha = .05$). Unstandardized path coefficients are in parentheses.

a significant positive relationship between total satisfaction and the level of decision maker trust in the researcher conducting the project. This indicates that decision makers who are more satisfied are likely to develop a higher level of trust in the academic researcher. With respect to Hypothesis 3, no consistent relationship between trust in the researcher and academic intelligence use was found. There was no significant relationship for Year 1, whereas for Year 2, higher trust in the researcher indeed results in higher academic intelligence use. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected for Year 1 and supported for Year 2.

Concerning the factors that influence total satisfaction with the academic research project, the following conclusions can be drawn from our empirical study. Hypothesis 4

is supported by the data for both years: A significant positive relationship was found between quality of the contents of the academic research project and total satisfaction. The more positive a decision maker evaluates the actual contents of the project, the more satisfied he or she will be in total. For both years, we found no significant relationships between quality of form, actionability, and political acceptability on one hand and total satisfaction with the academic research project on the other hand. Therefore, Hypotheses 5, 6, and 7 are not supported by our study. In support of Hypothesis 8, however, it was found for both Years 1 and 2 that interpersonal characteristics of the researcher indeed are positively related to total satisfaction with the project. The more positive the interpersonal characteristics of the researcher are evaluated, the more satisfied the decision maker is with the academic research project in total.

The nonsignificant relationships that were found for quality of form, actionability, and political acceptability of the intelligence gave rise to some further analyses. Inspection of the modification indices suggested two additional relationships in our model, which have not been hypothesized a priori. On the basis of these indices, it could be concluded for Year 1 that, in support of Deshpandé and Zaltman (1982), political acceptability of the academic intelligence was directly and positively related to its use for marketing decision-making purposes. The more the information is perceived as acceptable for the service-providing firm and in agreement with company objectives, the more likely it will be used. Furthermore, in accordance with Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman (1993), we found a significant positive relationship for Year 2 between researcher interpersonal characteristics and decision maker trust in the researcher. The more positive the academic researcher's interpersonal characteristics (e.g., expertise, integrity, and flexibility) are evaluated, the more the researcher will be trusted by users of the intelligence disseminated.

CONCLUSION

Discussion

Our study yields a number of interesting findings. First of all, differences over time were found. This emphasizes the dynamic nature of relationships between the center and its clients. Initially, the results suggest that it seems important to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the client's situation and provide information that is in accordance with the client company's objectives. As the relationship develops, trust in the researcher becomes increasingly important. For both years, satisfaction had a significant, positive effect on trust in the researcher. This provides support for our reasoning that satisfying clients is important for academic providers of research intelligence, both from a short-term and a long-term perspective. Satisfied users are more likely to actually use the intelligence for service marketing decision-making purposes. Moreover, satisfaction increases decision maker trust in the researcher, which ultimately becomes an important factor for achieving higher levels of intelligence use. An insight into the drivers of satisfaction, therefore, seems relevant. For both years, quality of contents is a key driver. The same holds for a researcher' interpersonal characteristics, such as expertise, integrity, and flexibility. For both years, these characteristics were also found to be positively contributing to user satisfaction.

The results of another recent study conducted by the authors that used the same conceptual model and was tested for commercial research agency/user dyads suggest that there are differences with respect to the specific setting in which marketing intelligence is investigated (see van Birgelen, de Ruyter, and Wetzels 2001). It was found that in addition to quality of contents and research agency characteristics, significant positive effects of quality of form and actionability on user satisfaction exist. Furthermore, quality of contents had a direct positive effect on intelligence use and, as was also found in the present study for Year 1, trust did not significantly affect intelligence use. Comparison of the results of both studies suggests that for the evaluation of commercial agencies, other factors seem to be taken into main consideration.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Part of the strength of a study lies in the recognition of its limitations. In this way, potential issues that merit future research efforts may be identified. Our findings are based on one specific setting. Extension to other settings is necessary. Also, more insight should be obtained into the underlying reasons for differences in effectiveness between academic and commercial research centers. In addition, our study suffers from a number of measurement shortcomings. Reliability and validity issues should be addressed in future research. In addition, despite the amount of variance in total satisfaction explained by our service quality constructs, the inclusion of additional variables could improve the model. Such variables might include user organizational characteristics, such as organizational structure and culture, or interorganizational characteris-

tics, such as user or researcher power in the dyad (Moorman, Deshpandé, and Zaltman 1993). Finally, future research should take different types of information use into account. In the present study, we focused on a combination of instrumental and conceptual use. By making an explicit differentiation between use types, further insights into the objectives for which information can be used and factors influencing these usage types could be developed. For example, it can be expected that the level to which information can be acted upon (actionability) might become more important when the main objective of the information is strategy determination (instrumental use). On the other hand, when intelligence is intended to legitimize or justify previous actions (symbolic use), the effect of political acceptability might be quite strong.

Our findings have several practical implications for academic service research centers. Academic research centers should continuously monitor satisfaction levels of the clients for whom they conduct research. Evaluative meetings during, as well as at the end, of a research project are needed for assessing client satisfaction and for identifying potential issues for improvement. Furthermore, our results suggest that the adoption of a relationship-oriented perspective is essential. When the research project was conducted for the first time, information-related factors had a direct effect on intelligence use. Service research centers, therefore, need to develop a thorough understanding of the client organization's specific decision-making situation, existing beliefs, budgets, and resource allocations. Over time, establishing trust by focusing on account management skills seems essential. This implies that in research personnel selection and training procedures, it is desirable to explicitly focus on traits such as integrity, flexibility, and overall customer service orientation. Researchers should adhere to high standards, maintain objectivity in the research process, be aware of the confidential nature of the information they provide, and possess the knowledge and technical skills to do their job adequately. To satisfy clients, it is important for academic researchers to keep in mind that they seem to be evaluated on different factors in comparison with commercial research agencies. Without implying they are not important, factors as the way in which results are presented, actionability, and political acceptability of the information seem to be less relevant for service research center effectiveness. It seems to be more important to focus on quality of the contents of an academic research project by offering transparency and background information on research techniques, data collection methods, argumentation and conclusions, and creating a perception of value for money.

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